

1 – 1 HAZARDOUS WASTE MANAGEMENT **HEALTH IMPACTS**

For over two decades federal and state laws and regulations have been established to govern the proper management of waste. Through the implementation of these laws and regulations, protection of public health and the environment is achieved. Historically, the improper management of wastes has raised serious concerns regarding public health and environmental impacts. The need for this level of protection has in turn driven federal and state lawmakers to enact health and environmental protection laws. In concert with and under authority of these environmental laws, the Department of Environmental Quality has established regulatory standards and requirements to prevent the mismanagement of wastes. Compliance with these statutory and regulatory provisions ensures proper protection of public health and the environment.

Since 1981, Utah has had in place the statutory authority addressing waste management activities throughout the state. The Division of Solid and Hazardous Waste administers the statewide waste program.

As commercial hazardous waste management facilities comply with existing statutory and regulatory standards, public health and environmental risks and hazards are significantly minimized. Continued oversight monitoring and on-site compliance evaluations serve to ensure existing public health and environmental protection standards are met.

Because the physical and chemical makeup of all regulated hazardous wastes is as varied as the many industrial processes that generate such waste streams, a specific evaluation of public health impacts for all hazardous wastes is not practical for this summary. Information on individual hazardous waste can be provided. Additionally, it is important to understand that hazardous wastes make up only small portion of the overall amount of chemicals, products, and materials that are produced and used daily throughout Utah and the entire country. Hazardous wastes are only a small component of the larger categories of hazardous materials and hazardous substances which are generally more prevalent than hazardous wastes and therefore create a potentially significant impact to public health and the environment if misused, spilled, or improperly handled.

In summary, the existing environmental regulatory program with its related standards and requirements establishes the necessary framework for proper protection of public health and the environment by preventing the improper handling and mismanagement of hazardous wastes. Compliance on the part of hazardous waste generators, transporters, and waste management facilities with these statutory and regulatory provisions ensures proper protection of public health and the environment.